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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Sacramento Region to See Next Wave of Cell Phone and Texting High Visibility Enforcement**

*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.*

**(Sacramento)** – Drivers in the greater Sacramento region who are still using handheld cell phones or texting will be targeted for special enforcement starting Monday. Extra law enforcement officers from 37 police departments and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) will be on the streets February 25 through March 10, looking for those putting themselves and others in danger by these distracted driving practices.

This marks the second of three special high visibility enforcement periods testing tactics that may be employed nationally in the future. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) awarded the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) \$600,000 to fund three waves of enforcement and “*Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other*” public awareness designed to convince drivers that distracted driving is dangerous. The first operation in December saw 3,008 citations issued, despite being hampered by bad weather. The special enforcement region stretches from Modesto to Marysville and Vallejo to South Lake Tahoe.

“Distracted driving is one of the most dangerous actions you can take on our roadways,” said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. “Handheld talking or texting on a cell phone while driving will no longer be tolerated. This “*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other*” campaign will offer a tough reminder to any drivers caught by law enforcement breaking the mobile device laws.”

The number of distracted driving deaths is rising nationally, up to 3,331 in 2011, with more than 400,000 injured. In 2011, the California Department of Motor Vehicles reported over 475,000 convictions for handheld cell phone usage and texting.

Distracted drivers talking on a hand-held cell phone or texting will receive a first-time ticket costing a minimum of \$159, with a second offense costing \$279. But the goal of the special enforcement operation is not to issue tickets, but to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

The Office of Traffic Safety offers these simple tips to keep you or someone else from being a victim of distracted driving:

- Turn off your phone and/or put it out of reach while driving
- Include in your outgoing message that you can't answer while you are driving
- Don't call or text anyone at a time when you think they may be driving

“With the growing dangers of talking or texting on a cell phone while driving, we are happy and fortunate that NHTSA picked California’s capitol region for this effort,” said Director Murphy. “We will save lives here this year, while helping plans to save lives across the country in the future.”

Remember: *Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.*

For more information on distracted driving, please visit [www.distraction.gov/sacramentoregion](http://www.distraction.gov/sacramentoregion).

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